

Appl. No. : 10/521,205
Filed : January 12, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1, 8, and 10 have been amended and support therefor can be found in the drawings, for example. Claim 11 has been amended and support therefor can be found in Figs 17-18, 30-32, and 35, for example. Claim 12 has been amended and support therefor can be found in Figs 17, 18, and 32, for example. Claim 17 has been added and support therefor can be found in Figs. 14-18, 22-25, and 28-39, for example. No new matter has been added. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lee (US5,838,856). Claims 1, 8, 10, and 11 are independent and have been amended to clarify the invention. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 1 recites: "an adapter for fixing said plugs one by one in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber, wherein said plugs are each independently detachable from the adapter."

In Lee, as shown in Fig 4, an adapter for fixing the plugs (110, 120) one by one in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber is the adapter (130), not the adaptor (150). However, the plugs (110, 120) are not each independently detachable from the adapter (130). In Lee, both of the plugs must be detached together from the adapter (130). Like Fig. 4, Fig. 12 of Lee shows that the plugs (210, 220) are not each independently detachable from the adapter (130).

Thus, each and every element of claim 1 cannot be found in Lee, and accordingly, claim 1 cannot be anticipated by Lee. Claims 8 and 10 recite limitations similar to those recited in claim 1, and for the same reason, claims 8 and 10 cannot be anticipated by Lee. At least for this reason, the remaining dependent claims also cannot be anticipated by Lee.

Additionally, the claimed connecting structure provides unique features and advantages over conventional structures like Lee which are described in the instant specification as follows.

Push-pull connectors which are easily put in and out in the axial direction of the optical fibers have been proposed. *** However, *** there are problems that the space cannot be effectively used, for example, many devices can not be installed because of the space

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required for putting in or out the connectors. Furthermore, it is necessary for connecting optical modules each other on the mother board or in the apparatus that the optical fibers have to be arranged with a surplus in length so as to put in or out the connectors and to maintain a handling workability. Consequently, the optical fibers become bulky on the mother board or in the apparatus and an excessive space is needed. *** (emphasis added.)
Page 1 line 27 through page 2 line 27.

Claim 11 recites: "a step of inserting at least one optical fiber into two plugs, respectively, each plug having a slidable member which is capable of sliding with respect to the two plugs in an axial direction of the optical fiber, a step of attaching said two plugs to an adapter one by one in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber, and a step of fixing said two plugs to the adapter by sliding each slidable member with respect to the two plugs in the axial direction of the optical fiber."

The Examiner states: "the method steps of claims 11-16 are disclosed by Lee in the explanation of the separate components functioning together. The relevant steps can be found in Figure 1-4".

In Fig 4 of Lee, guide pins (113) are shown, but they are not slidable with respect to the plugs (110, 120). In Fig 4, the guide pins (113) are slid only in guide hole (153) of the adapter (150). Thus, each and every element of claim 11 cannot be found in Lee, and accordingly, claim 11 cannot be anticipated by Lee. At least for this reason, the remaining dependent claims also cannot be anticipated by Lee.

New claim 17

Claim 17 has been added. Claim 17 is independent and recites:

inserting at least one optical fiber into two plugs, respectively;

placing a slidable member in at least one of the plugs, said slidable member being slidable along said one of the plugs in an axial direction of the optical fiber;

attaching said two plugs to an adapter one by one in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber so as to align each optical fiber of the respective two plugs; and

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sliding the slidable member from said one of the plugs toward the other one of the plugs along the two plugs already attached to the adapter in the axial direction of the optical fiber so as to place the slidable member between the two plugs.

Figs. 14-18, 22-25, and 28-39, for example, show the above steps. Lee does not disclose the above steps. It is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is patentable over Lee.

CONCLUSION

In light of the Applicant's amendments to the claims and the foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.


Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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